

Edinburgh's launched today

Christmas



It does seem like we have only just celebrated Halloween, but the organisers of Edinburgh's Christmas already have their plans well-formed for your entertainment throughout December. We were invited to the launch this morning to hear all about the events they have in mind...

Events start with the Light Night on November 24 2011. There will be a fourteen metre high Snow Queen with pyro effects. But all the old favourites will return, including the lighting of Edinburgh's Norwegian Christmas Tree on The Mound, and there will be the usual markets in Princes Street Gardens.

One of the major changes this year is that Princes Street will be emptied of all traffic, including tram works, and there will be events and activities there during the whole period, but particularly on the weekends. There will be plenty of opportunity to eat and drink al fresco and Christmas shopping should be easier as the shops plan to stay open later than usual.

There will also be St Andrew's Day events including ice sculptures and a fire-themed finale on Edinburgh Castle Esplanade.

This is all part of Scotland's Winter Festivals. Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs commented:- "Christmas is such a special time of the year for families and friends to come together to reflect on the meaning of Christmas and enjoy our favourite festive traditions. Edinburgh's Christmas celebrations – from the traditional nativity scene and carol concerts to Santa zumba and ice

sculpting – look truly spectacular.”

The nativity scene will be sited in St Andrew Square gardens where Occupy Edinburgh have reportedly agreed to make way for it.

Santa will visit East Princes Street Gardens on 3 December 2011. The Santa Run will take place in West Princes Street Gardens after a zumba warm-up.

The ice rink has been saved by way of a financial package offered by Essential Edinburgh. Andy Neal, chief executive of Essential Edinburgh commented:-“Essential Edinburgh felt it was important to make a significant investment to support the Christmas activities – and we are delighted to play a big part. We wanted to step in to remove the unhelpful uncertainty which surrounded the continued presence of Edinburgh’s Ice Rink. With all that is going on in the city centre, it was essential that we did not lose such a popular attraction at a vital time of the year for our levy-payers.”

The full programme for all events from 27 November to 4 January is available on [Edinburgh’s Christmas website](#).